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HAPPINESS, TRANQUILLITY, AND PHILOSOPHY

ABSTRACT: *Despite the near universal desire for happiness, relatively little philosophy has been done to determine what "happiness" means. In this paper I examine happiness (in the long-term sense), and argue that it is best understood in terms of tranquillity. This is not merely "contentment." Rather, happiness requires reflection—the kind of reflection characteristic of philosophy. Happiness is the product of correctly assessing its conditions, and like any assessment, one can be mistaken, and thus mistaken about whether one is happy. That is, one needs a correct understanding of happiness in order to be happy.*

> The happiness of mankind, as well as of all other rational creatures, seems to have been the original purpose intended by the Author of nature, when he brought them into existence. No other end seems worthy of that supreme wisdom and divine benignity which we

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> necessarily ascribe to him; and this opinion, which we are led to by the abstract consideration of his infinite perfections, is still more confirmed by the examination of the works of nature, which seem all intended to promote happiness, and to guard against misery.
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> —Adam Smith (*Theory of Moral Sentiments* III.5.7)

Few questions would seem to possess as great an existential urgency, and general philosophical interest, as "What is happiness?" It seems that we spend our lives desperately looking for happiness; if happiness is not *the* ultimate end of our activities, as Aristotle argued, it is certainly *an* ultimate end. To be deprived of happiness seems in the eyes of most of us to be deprived of a good life, even of a good reason for living. A life without happiness seems scarcely worth having; one would bear it out of necessity, not out of its desirability. The "pursuit of happiness," in Jefferson's Lockean phrase, seems thoroughly woven into our projects and aspirations.

The topic nonetheless possesses several strange features. The first is that philosophers have had relatively little to say about it in spite of its enormous importance to human life. One would have thought it a perfect, indeed indispensable topic for a Platonic dialogue; yet no Platonic dialogue is devoted to it. Aristotle, and to a lesser degree some of his Hellenistic descendants, of course, did write on the subject. But Aristotle is the exception that proves the rule. There exist some limited treatments by major Christian and medieval philosophers; one thinks of the remarks by Boethius in *The Consolation of Philosophy* and by Thomas in the *Summa Theologiae* (the first six questions of book two—of the Prima Secundae—constituting the so-called "Treatise on Happiness"). But no major medieval treatise devoted to the subject has come down to us. Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley, Voltaire, Hutcheson, Hume, Burke, and Smith offer us remarks, but once again no extended treatment (though Locke and Spinoza come close). Diderot provides ruminations on the subject, and in *Les Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire* Rousseau offers us something that is more in the nature of a meditation than an argument. Kant has relatively little to say about the nature of happiness, although happiness plays a major role in the architectonic of his ethical system. For Hegel, too, the topic is of derivative interest.[1] Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre have precious little to say; Nietzsche's remarks are scattered; surprisingly, there are no long treatments in Emerson, Thoreau, James, or Dewey. Among the Utilitarians, where one would expect major treatments, there are no extended analyses of the nature of happiness; I suppose that Sidgwick probably provides us with the longest remarks, but these scarcely amount to a comprehensive treatment of the subject.[2] We have Bertrand Russell's essay,[3] a few scattered remarks by Wittgenstein, nothing of note by Whitehead. There exist contemporary discussions, and no doubt there are others one might mention.[4] But, by and large, the major philosophers in the Western tradition have not paid the topic a great deal of attention.[5]

This leads me to a second observation about this subject. Nonphilosophers seem generally to assume that there is an answer to the question, "What is happiness?" They do not view the search for happiness, or for an understanding of happiness, as a hopeless quest. Some claim to have found it and (perhaps for a fee) will tell you how to do the same. At the same time, there seems to be general agreement that happiness is a *difficult* thing to "find," i.e., to define and to attain. It does not come naturally. Elusive, hard to find and hold on to, much desired, very easy to be mistaken about; such is happiness. It is a strange situation; happiness is such a constant theme in our lives, it is something that would seem to be so much a part of us as to be unable to remain unknown; yet we cannot find it, at least not readily.

A third observation is that "happiness" has many meanings. It can be thought of as contentment, or tranquillity, or blessedness, or ecstasy, or as a mood, or as well-being, to name a few possibilities. One can speak of it in the long-term or in the short-term sense.[6] We are not always clear about which sense we have in mind when we talk casually about our being "happy." There is a certain diffuseness to the notion, and our vocabulary of happiness is not a fail-safe guide to the meaning of the term.

Fourth, it is hard to define happiness in a manner that is more than impressionistic, biographical, or anecdotal. The nature of happiness seems to vary from person to person. This is one reason it has been so hard to make any sense of a utilitarian calculus. An individual's "happiness" seems to depend at least in part on what he thinks it is. Perhaps this is what Pope (1981, 42) meant when he asked, of the standard views of happiness: "Who thus define it, say they more or less/ Than this, that Happiness is Happiness?" This seems to be an elliptical way of saying that happiness is whatever one deems it to be.

And this brings me to an important methodological point. Given that any substantive discussion of happiness must begin somewhere, with some view or other on the phenomena, there may be an appearance of arbitrariness at the start of any investigation of the subject. In identifying a sense of the term as the subject of discussion, one must appeal to some intuition or opinion, and inevitably others will appeal to other intuitions and opinions. We must, as Aristotle says in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, start with what is known to us in order to reach what is knowable in itself (I.iv.1095b2–7). But parts of what is known to us conflict with other parts.

For example, people often assume that happiness has a "you'll know it when you see it" quality to it, such that we can with certainty identify happy people without being able to provide an account of happiness. Yet people also recognize that they frequently see mistakenly; they will say "I thought he was so happy! I've known him for years! I can't believe he committed suicide!" Or: "I thought I was happy then, but now I realize that I wasn't." Or again, people often associate the accumulation of wealth with happiness, and perhaps are motivated to accumulate wealth precisely because they think it will bring them great happiness. Yet moralists have always told us, and experience seems to confirm, that neither the pursuit of wealth nor success in that pursuit bring happiness.[7] So while we must start somewhere, with some intuition about happiness and some specification of which sense of the term is to be investigated, we must also recognize that there are conflicts between prephilosophical intuitions about happiness. I see no way of avoiding this old methodological problem, though I do not infer that the problem is fatal to any effort to reach more than parochial conclusions.[8]

Aristotle grants that people have different things in mind when they speak of happiness, but sees them as competing specifications of the same generally shared understanding of happiness as "the good life" (*to eu zēn*) or "doing well" (*to eu prattein*). That happiness so understood is that good at which politics aims is, he also says, the opinion of nearly everyone (*N.E.* I.iv.1095a14–21). These assertions are facilitated to some extent by the word he is using for "happiness"—*eudaimonia*—and they pave the way for his understanding of "doing well" as "activity of soul in accordance with excellence." They are thus crucial to the progress of his argument; both, however, may be disputed. For example, Kant rejected them.

Kant's own definition of happiness (below) is itself highly disputable. And yet some initial general understanding of the phenomenon is unavoidable in a discussion of this topic.[9] Let me therefore specify that in approaching the notion of "happiness," I have from the start one particular sense of the term in mind, namely that in which we can speak of a person as *generally* happy, as happy over the long term. We do speak of happiness in quite different senses, as when remarking "that was the happiest moment of my life," or "that was pure bliss." But in the long-range sense of "happiness," you could say you are happy even though at the moment of saying it you might not feel happy. We often feel happiness at this or that object; for example, I can be happy when I receive tenure. This is different from the happiness that applies to a life as a whole and thus arises from a certain way of leading a life.

In choosing to reflect on happiness in this more comprehensive sense, I am following Aristotle's lead. You recall his remark that "one swallow does not make a spring, nor does one sunny day; similarly, one day or a short time does not make a man blessed (*makarion)* and happy (*eudaimon*)" (*N.E.* I.vii.1098a18–20). Kant, too, for all of his differences with Aristotle, speaks of "happiness" in this long-range sense.[10] I thus mean to distinguish happiness from joy, ecstasy, a romantic transcending bliss, and the like. Happiness, in the sense I am discussing it, is not a mood. Moods may perhaps be referred to legitimately by our word "happiness," but I am interested in discussing the long-term sense of the word. It is precisely this sense which people seem most to have in mind when engaged in the *pursuit* of happiness.

I do not wish to imply that momentary bliss and long-range happiness are entirely separable. On the contrary, it seems to me that the former is, when properly understood, dependent on the latter. If by "bliss" one means something like the spiritual or intellectual grasp of reality—something like the contemplation or elevation of soul that Plato, Aristotle, Pope, and a long train of thinkers recommend to us as the height of happiness—then bliss is undergirded by that fundamental arrangement of soul that in turn constitutes long-term happiness. One need not think of bliss in so edified a way, however, to see the point. Contemplating the beauty of a panoramic Alpine vista, absorbing the tranquillity that such beauty affords, grasping that one is but a part of this splendid whole—is the bliss such an activity affords really available to those who are

fundamentally unhappy, over the long term? They may look at the scene, and say it is "really something"; but do they not see with jaundiced eyes?

Of course, we speak of bliss in a still less elevated sense, one that breaks the connection to long-range happiness. I have in mind physical pleasure, and the "bliss" that people speak of after having indulged in a good meal, or something else of that sort. Nature seems to have provided this modicum of bliss to almost everybody. But again, neither noble nor vulgar bliss is the main focus of this paper, and in using the term "happiness" I shall have, unless otherwise indicated, the long-range sense in mind.

Having specified the sense of the term I shall investigate, let me make another preliminary point. "Happiness" has both subjective and objective qualities; it is both an *experience* and a *notion*. Thus, on the one hand, it would be insufficient to characterize the conditions of happiness while ignoring the experience of it. This is so for two reasons. First, the experience of it is part of what we have in mind when using the term, and second, calling such and such the conditions of *happiness* is to have a view of this rather than that experience of which these are the conditions.

On the other hand, happiness is not *just* an experience, and should not be understood simply in terms of the self-understanding or first-person reports of agents. For those reports can be mistaken, as indicated above. I can assert that I am happy, that I am living a happy life, and be wrong. I can say that I feel happy, but be mistaken in applying that term to what I am feeling. Happiness is not a brute feeling, unlike the pain one feels when one is kicked hard in the shin. Rather, it is a relational term; I am happy about the way my life has gone and is going. As I reflect on what I mean when I say my life is or is not happy, I see that I have judgments in mind about myself, the world, what is satisfying now and over the long term, what is worth pursuing and avoiding, and so forth. I could be mistaken in assessing any of these things.

In the first part of this paper I shall discuss further both the experience and the notion of happiness; and I shall argue that the experience of happiness is best understood, *ab initio*, in terms of tranquillity. Hence the second word in the title. At the same time, I shall suggest that we cannot be happy unless we rightly assess the conditions of our happiness. In the second part of this paper, I shall attempt further to elucidate what happiness is by distinguishing it

from what I shall call "contentment," and shall explore further the connection between happiness and assessment, or reflection. As I shall put it, one needs a right understanding of happiness in order to be happy. The third part of the paper is an attempt to understand the relationship between happiness and a particular kind of reflection, namely, philosophy. Like Epictetus, I think it crucial to explain why a Socrates can be happy even when faced with execution, and the explanation involves the relation between philosophy and happiness. I shall argue that the sort of account Epictetus gives of this remarkable phenomenon is, however, incomplete at best.

The argument of this paper resembles that of ancient ethical theories in that it connects happiness with virtue (or excellence of character), virtue with reflection, and reflection with philosophy. But I am also incorporating several features into the account that are perhaps more modern; in particular, the view that happiness should be described as, in part, a feeling or experience of a certain sort.

Needless to say, there are many other issues that a comprehensive treatment of the subject would have to cover, including the connection between happiness and happenstance, vulnerability, control, social context, time, the passions and emotions, pleasure, the good and goods (both external and internal), the virtues, spiritual fulfillment, and the divine. Above all, my account should be followed by a discussion of what constitutes a well-ordered life, given the overall direction of the argument. I cannot offer any such comprehensive treatment here. My present effort may be compared to a rough sketch of this subtle landscape. I have throughout adhered to Aristotle's injunction that one should expect only so much precision as the subject matter allows, and I trust the reader will do the same.

I. HAPPINESS AND TRANQUILLITY

> Happiness consists in tranquillity and enjoyment. Without tranquillity there can be no enjoyment; and where there is perfect tranquillity there is scarce any thing which is not capable of amusing.
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> —Adam Smith (*Theory of Moral Sentiments* III.3.30)

Happiness is best characterized, at the start, in terms of tranquillity.[11] "Tranquillity" captures the connection between happiness

and being at rest. In the sense of the term that can be predicated of a person over time, of a person's life, happiness is more like rest than motion, in two senses. First, happiness consists in one's being at rest in the sense of lacking significant discord; it is peaceful, at a deep level. Second, it consists in one's being at rest in that it is more like coming to a stop than like a process of moving towards a goal. Happiness is an end state, a completion or fulfillment, rather than an overcoming of a lack.[12] It is thanks to this second point that happiness and contentment are so closely associated; and later, I shall say more about the difference between the two. When you say "I have lived happily" or "I am deeply happy," you mean, among other things, that you do not experience significant internal discord, and that fundamentally you occupy a spiritual place from which you do not desire to move. You are not, at a deep level, anxious; basically, you are properly oriented, and your fundamental stance towards the world is complete, at rest.

"Tranquillity" usually translates the Greek term *ataraxia*, a term that is the natural competitor to the one Plato and Aristotle use, *eudaimonia*. *Eudaimonia* is normally translated, with trepidation, as "happiness," and less often as "blessedness"; *ataraxia* is also difficult to translate, and "tranquillity" is something of an approximation. "Imperturbability" also captures something of its sense. Let me say a few more words about the term *ataraxia*, then explain further why I think it offers a good starting point.

The word *ataraxia* does not appear in Plato or Aristotle. It is to be found in important passages in Sextus Empiricus, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Epicurus, among others.[13] The word goes back to Homer. There it is used of horses, among other things; a horse struck by an arrow is said to have "disturbed" (*etaraxe*) the chariot and other horses (*Iliad*, 8.86); Taraxippus ("Disturber of Horses") spooked race courses. In a number of writers the verb can refer to mental or physical personal disturbance, or to the "disturbance" of a polis, i.e., the upsetting of civic discord, since stirring up trouble, agitating, distracting, lead to loss of *ataraxia* in the community. One can "disturb" a thing, as when one stirs up a body of water; a mudslinger or muckraker can "disturb" an individual or a community; one can "disturb" in the sense of meddle, upset; an army or navy that is thrown into confusion is thus described by Thucydides. Thucydides (4.96.3) uses the verb in describing a battle in which Athenians mistakenly kill one another as a result of their general confusion and disorientation.

In general, then, peacefulness and calmness are akin to *ataraxia*. The condition of not being disturbed, not being spooked, not being torn apart and confused; something like this is *ataraxia*. Understood as *ataraxia*, happiness is a state of mind, or better, a state of soul. In speaking of *eudaimonia*, Epictetus explicitly equates it with *ataraxia*, and that with freedom and an absence of passions (*apatheia*).[14] It is rather like a state of peacefulness, being in control, inner harmony, calm, rest; as opposed to a state of war, unfulfillable desire, internal discord, disturbance, motion, perturbation. There is something right about this view of happiness, although I do not want to endorse the Stoic view in its entirety. Let me elucidate the direction of my argument by means of several passages from Hobbes.

In Part I of the *Leviathan*, we read: "*Continuall successe* in obtaining those things which a man from time to time desireth, that is to say, continuall prospering, is that men call FELICITY; I mean the Felicity of this life. For there is no such thing as perpetuall Tranquillity of mind, while we live here; because Life it selfe is but Motion, and can never be without Desire, nor without Feare, no more than without Sense" (Hobbes 1972, 129–30). Further on in the book Hobbes takes up the same theme. After declaring that there is no such thing as a *summum bonum*, contrary to the "books of the old Morall Philosophers," he states: "felicity is a continuall progresse of the desire, from one object to another; the attaining of the former, being still but the way to the later. . . . And therefore the voluntary actions, and inclinations of all men, tend, not only to the procuring, but also to the assuring of a contented life. . . . I put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death" (ibid., 160–61).[15] In other words, life is continually in motion because it is ceaselessly driven by desire, anxiety, and fear, especially the fear of violent death. Human life is fundamentally disturbance, disquiet, or "*tarachē*." We move from one object of desire to another, one satisfaction to the next, in a restless search for the stability that stems from security, i.e., an equality of power with other people. From this anxiety or motion Hobbes explains a wide range of human phenomena, from competition to conscience, to ambition to curiosity to eloquence.

If life were like this, in motion and anxious, then we surely

would not call it happy; we would not possess what Hobbes calls "perpetuall Tranquillity of mind," i.e., that general cessation of the sort of spiritual motion he describes. The operative contrast in Hobbes's picture is between tranquillity over time and episodes of satisfaction that add up, over time, to "Felicity." Felicity is inseparable from anxiety, whereas tranquillity is not. We can accept that some lives, that of the tyrant for example, lack even felicity; Xenophon's *Hiero* provides a wonderful discussion to that effect, and helps us understand why the notion of the "happy tyrant" is oxymoronic.

Hobbes's parallel distinctions between felicity and tranquillity, motion and rest, desiring and completion, seem basically right. Up to a point we may accept Hobbes's description of a "felicitous" human life as a continuous movement from anxious desire to satisfaction to anxious desire, and of tranquillity as a continuous and stable sense of peacefulness over time. But we need not accept with Hobbes either that felicity is all there is to happiness, or that it is impossible to achieve it.

The enemy of tranquillity is anxiety. I have in mind not so much anxiety about this or that event—the sort of anxiety one has about getting to the airport on time—but rather a general anxiety about things being out of kilter, not stable, not holding, potentially dissolving.[16] When Hobbes talks about people's fear that their competitors might gain more power, enough power to threaten them, he is getting at this general anxiety, though he remains within the sphere of the political. That nagging doubt, or even the quiet dread of . . . of what? Perhaps it is something like the dread that the foundations on which we built our life are not yet finished, or may crumble, or never were well laid. Existentially this sense of being at risk might manifest itself in a number of different ways. Perhaps (one might think), "My life has been a waste, amounted to nothing. What have I become? What will become of me? Was this a praiseworthy life?" Even worse, the soul may whisper to itself: "I don't know, things are so difficult to discern clearly, I seem surrounded by grayness and beyond that by darkness, everything is so . . . indefinite, formless." When worries such as these eat away your soul, anxiety or *tarachē* has won out over happiness.[17]

The opposite of anxiety, *ataraxia*, captures the affective, subjective dimension of happiness. Recognizing this dimension does not mean that happiness is merely a state of mind or a feeling. But happiness is, I believe, recognizable in part by such affects and is inseparable from them. The feeling or experience or state of mind denoted by *ataraxia* is, speaking in broad terms once again, something like a sense of basic tranquillity, restfulness, or peacefulness.

The association of happiness with tranquillity is a very old one, and seems to me to articulate one fundamental view of the matter. A competing view follows Aristotle in associating happiness with activity (*energeia*). Aristotelians define happiness as activity of the soul in accordance with excellence (*arete*). Happiness is the *summum bonum*, and the highest good for a person consists in excellence in his proper function (*ergon*), i.e., in the proper activity or work of the psyche. There is a place, if a problematic one, for "external goods" in this picture; happiness is not just the exercise of virtue. This is what one might call an objectivist definition of happiness, and it has several obvious advantages. It provides us with a means of assessing claims to happiness and of explaining how people can be mistaken in thinking they are happy. It links up happiness with ethics and with how one leads one's life as a whole. It provides a basis for distinguishing between happiness and contentment.

Putting aside problems of making sense of Aristotle's notions of soul, natural function, and excellence, and the famous difficulty of reconciling practical and theoretical virtue, however, this definition does not connect clearly with the *experience* of happiness.[18] Aristotle says that excellence (*arete*) is not a feeling (a *pathos*) (*N.E.* II.v.1105b27), and he never says that happiness *is* a feeling.[19] Since happiness is *energeia*, it would seem at odds with the passivity connoted by the term *pathos*. And as an activity in accordance with virtues that by definition are not feelings, it would be strange if Aristotle thought of happiness as a feeling or emotion. His word for happiness (*eudaimonia*), and his association of happiness with human flourishing, lead him to think of happiness as a *condition* of the self rather than an *experience*.

Yet it is odd to divorce one's description of the happy life from the way such a life is actually experienced. Is proper functioning of the soul compatible with a life of unsettled anxiety? Does it really make sense to call a life "happy" that exhibits ethical excellence in Aristotle's sense but is not experienced by the actor as—what shall we say—happy? That is, could you be happy in Aristotle's sense but not be aware that you are happy? I doubt that either Aristotle or we would answer in the affirmative. About the closest Aristotle gets

to a sustained discussion of the question is in his analysis of pleasure in the *Nicomachean Ethics* I.viii, of pleasure and friendship in IX.ix (he notes for example that friends help the good man become aware of his own existence as something good), and of pleasure and theoretical virtue in book X. He does grant that a life of misery and pain (such as that of Priam) cannot be happy. Yet this remains distant from what I take to be a legitimate demand in a discussion of happiness, namely that the notion be explicitly linked up with some view of what it feels like to be happy. Aristotle's reticence on the subject leaves open the objection that he has analyzed not happiness so much as the conditions for being ethical, and further that one could be ethical in his sense but, affectively speaking, be unhappy.[20] An objection of this sort would, if successful, create serious conceptual difficulties for Aristotle's ethical theory. I am suggesting that "tranquillity" begins to satisfy this general demand, though I do not claim it is compatible with relevant aspects of Aristotle's *Ethics* (*ataraxia* is nowhere mentioned by Aristotle). It is hard to see how Aristotle would connect tranquillity to activity of the soul in accordance with virtue, especially because such activity indisputably requires, on his account, moral virtue. Can the tumultuous life of the courageous statesman or soldier be happy in the sense of tranquil, on Aristotle's view?

A second difficulty with the Aristotelian view of happiness is his notion that happiness ia activity not simply as the actualization of potentiality, but as *actions*; the *telos* consists in actions, or activities (*N.E.* I.vii.1098b15–20). Happiness is not a movement (*kinesis*) from a beginning point to some *telos*; it is the actualization of that *telos*. *Kinesis* ceases when it reaches its *telos*; *energeia* does not. Yet *eudaimonia* is not simply lack of movement either; it is the kind of spiritual or intellectual motion engaged in when we philosophize or listen to music.[21] One could be moved by those experiences, or undergo them as one would painful work. Insofar as this view lacks a place for the notion that happiness is rest and peacefulness, it strikes me as, at the very least, incomplete.

Neither of the two basic alternative views of happiness—the Aristotelean and the Stoic—is alone adequate.[22] I have given some reasons why I think this true of happiness as Aristotelian activity. In spite of my endorsement of the association of happiness with tranquillity, however, one cannot accept that association without emendation. There are two main reasons for this.

First, it would be too easy to infer that felt tranquillity is real tranquillity, thereby eliminating the possibility of a person's being mistaken about being happy and, with it, the distinction between contentment and happiness, tranquillization and tranquillity. I take it that our account must preserve the possibility of self-deception or failure of self-knowledge; and therefore that, as already indicated, we require something like an objectivist view of the sort Aristotle articulates.

Second, the tranquillity view of happiness tends to be associated with *apatheia*, passionlessness, a levelling out of the emotions, detachment or indifference. This is precisely because of the link between tranquillity and rest, peacefulness, and the other qualities already spoken of, and the contrary association of the passions, emotions, and attachment with perturbance, discord, motion. Yet a life of tranquillity that is free of passion and attachment rightly strikes us as barren, dry, and uninspired—as forsaking much that is of value in human life. To eliminate psychic motion altogether, rather than to moderate it as appropriate, and then to call the resulting tranquillity "happiness" seems to purchase happiness at the price of human fulfillment, serenity at the price of humanity. Why should we accept a notion of happiness that demands so high a price? Epictetus admonishes in the *Enchiridion* (11): "Never say about anything, 'I have lost it,' but only 'I have given it back.' Is your child dead? It has been given back. Is your wife dead? She has been given back." Or again, Epictetus recommends that we react to the death of our child or wife just as we would to another man's loss of his child or wife (26). Happiness is, he contends in the *Discourses*, to be "*apathē*," *atarachon*," to have your own affairs under your control (IV.iv, 36–37). "Have you not heard over and over again that you ought to eradicate desire utterly, direct your aversion towards the things that lie within the sphere of choice, and these things only, that you ought to give up everything, your body, your property, your reputation, your books, turmoil, office, freedom from office?" (IV.iv.33).[23] To be passionate is to be moved, sometimes by things that are not under our control; at one level, then, passion is the price of *ataraxia*, precisely as Epictetus argues. In the final analysis, this view of tranquillity is so extreme as to provoke a Nietzschean question about its pathology; what sickness of soul, we are moved to ask, would lead us to sacrifice so much for happiness so

understood?[24] I do not wish to answer this question, so much as to register my agreement with the reason that prompts it.

If neither of the two fundamental views of happiness stands on its own, how are we to synthesize them? I have claimed that we must begin by seeing a close connection between happiness and tranquillity, but I am also claiming that happiness is to be connected, in some sense, to activity, to the passions, and to assessment. How are restfulness and spritual motion to be combined? Detachment and attachment? Inner peace and desire, incompleteness, lacking? It seems to me that a successful theory of happiness must answer these questions.

I suggested above that two senses of anxiety should be distinguished, the first an everyday anxiety about this or that event (missing my plane, etc.), the second a general anxiety that things are out of kilter, formless or disintegrating. I also suggested a distinction between Hobbesian felicity and tranquillity. The antidote to the first sort of anxiety is felicity. I make my plane, get the job I wanted, have a good meal; my anxiety about these things ends, I am in a good mood, and am satisfied for now. The antidote to the second sort of anxiety is tranquillity; at heart, I know who I am, where I am going, how I fit into the whole scheme, and indeed that there is a whole scheme into which I fit.

Happiness provides a sense of reflective integration over time.[25] Happiness as tranquillity in this long-lasting, structural sense is compatible with anxiety in the everyday sense. It is not so much equanimity as it is equipoise, balance, coherence, and settledness in one's basic stance. By contrast, the anxious person in the second sense of the term is fundamentally disturbed, off balance, never settled in the conviction that this is fundamentally the right way to spend one's life. The fittingness of one's basic stance is evident through reflection and, affectively, by the feeling that basically one would change nothing in one's life. One has lived and will live in this way; at that structural level, one is at rest, and tranquillity is correspondingly a sort of rest, of peacefulness, as I suggested at the start of this discussion.

One can and indeed must have all sorts of passions, attachments, commitments. These may well be turbulent at times; they certainly put one's happiness, in the sense of mood, at risk, for to some degree they put it in the hands of others. One's life may have moments of ecstasy or transcending bliss, and moments of anxiety in our first, ordinary sense of the term. Fortune will affect the course of things at this level. At the second-order level, however, one can be tranquil in the midst of first-order perturbance, though not every perturbance. One can be peaceful but engaged. Take Epictetus's example of losing a wife or child. My child suddenly dies; on Epictetus's account, tranquillity seems to require no, or virtually no, emotional response (cf. the *Republic*, 603e ff.). On my account it would and ought naturally lead to tremendous grief, proportionate to the loss. I have not therefore lost my tranquillity; for I will still say that it was right and good that I had this child, I would do it again, I would have others. I do not wish to push this to the absolute extreme, and say that a person enduring the tortures of a concentration camp could still be tranquil in my sense. But a person enduring the fate of a Socrates or Boethius might well be.[26]

It follows from this account that tranquillity or happiness will require assessment and reflection, but not that one be impervious to things outside one's sphere of choice or control. Epictetus thought Socrates' tranquillity on his death bed explicable on the basis that Socrates was, in effect, a Stoic. While I see why one might make that argument, I do not believe that it is faithful either to what Socrates means when he says, in the *Phaedo*, that philosophy is a preparation for death, or to his praise of eros in other dialogues. My construal of the relation between tranquillity and the tumult of ordinary life allows that Socrates would both experience great tranquillity in his life-long commitment to philosophy, a commitment that on his own account has brought him to his jail cell, and also experience everything from pain caused by the shackles to sorrow at the prospect of death. Tranquillity does not require *apatheia*. My account allows us to understand both how philosophy might provide Socrates his tranquillity, and at the same time be the sort of painful dialectical struggle for truth depicted in Plato's dialogues and re-enacted in so many philosophical conversations.

Yet I do not accept the extreme claim of Epicurus, who is said to have argued that the wise man could be happy (retain *ataraxia*) even on the rack.[27] There is no mathematically precise way to describe just how resistant tranquillity is to the misfortunes of life. But although it is not absolutely resistant, the example of Socrates reminds us that it is within our grasp even in the context of great misfortune, if only we have developed a reflective stance to which

our lives testify. I am not, therefore, breaking the tie between "happiness" and "hap" (that which comes about by chance or fortune).

Happiness is, I have insisted, a feeling as well as a reflective stance. But it is not this or that feeling.[28] It is rather like that feeling or felt quality that attends many other feelings one has in the course of a life one has assessed as being rightly oriented. The feelings it attends will include those of satisfaction, joy, delight, perhaps bliss; and it will settle over them all as the evening's light over the mountains. There will be shadows, too—feelings of frustration, incompleteness in this or that regard, regret, and so forth. These are not incompatible with the judgment that as a whole, one's life has been rightly oriented. The feeling of happiness, in my sense, signals a recognition that you are basically satisfied with who you are, and with reason; you do not want to be somebody else.

I have been sketching a way of reconciling two fundamental notions of happiness. I have attempted, among other things, to articulate that paradoxical mix of activity and passivity, of self-directedness and of feeling as though one is being carried by events in the direction one would wish for, that characterizes the experience of happiness. Later, I shall say why this reconciliation is problematic, and shall then try to show a way out of the difficulty. But first it is important to reflect further on the distinction between happiness or tranquillity and the related phenomenon of contentment.

II. HAPPINESS AND CONTENTMENT

> For who is content is happy. But as soon as any new uneasiness comes in, this Happiness is disturb'd, and we are set afresh on work in the pursuit of Happiness.
>
> —*John Locke (1990, 273)*

Tranquillity and felicity resemble one another, especially when one focuses on the feelings involved. Both seem describable as resting points, as lacking disturbance and anxiety, as exhibiting calmness and peacefulness. The momentarily satisfied person's abilities and passions have reached an equilibrium for now, in a way that mimics that stability recommended by the Stoics. He has what he wants, and enough of the things one ordinarily desires, and is satisfied with that.[29] But this feeling is not lasting. In this respect, Hobbes's "felicity" is like Locke's "contentment." It persists only until a "new uneasiness" sets in. I could be content with my job interview in the sense that it went well, but be very unhappy generally, even appalled at the whole path of life on which this job interview, indeed this job, are steps. One can be contented, even contented repeatedly, without being happy.

And even if one *were* content over the long haul, even if one possessed what Hobbes calls "felicity," there is a more important way in which it is distinguished from happiness as I have characterized it; and that is the tendency of contentment to reduce itself to a state of mind severed from an appraisal of the truth of the matter. Contentment and unreflectiveness are natural allies. At the extreme, the content are, so to speak, tranquillized. I have in mind the figure of the contented slave, or the contented sinner; someone resigned to the limitations of life, someone for whom the link between the subjective feeling and an assessment of the worthiness of his life is broken.[30] It is for this reason that Nietzsche heaps such scorn on happiness understood as contentment, and Heidegger portrays daily existence as "inauthentic" and as mired unreflectively in the "everyday."[31] Contentment seems to be the road to mediocrity. It is often compared to the life of the beasts, not without reason; my dog, for example, can certainly be happy in the sense of being content. When you doze after a fine meal, you are not happy, however peaceful you may be. You are semiconscious, and contented.

One could reply that we sometimes use the word "contentment" to refer precisely to the sort of reflective tranquillity I have sketched in Part I above, and "happiness" in reference to, say, one's dog. I grant the objection, but it is merely a verbal point. We also use the words in the sense I am now isolating, and we recognize the distinction between the phenomena in question.

The confusion between the phenomena of happiness and contentment is, nevertheless, widespread. The often-belated recognition that the two are distinct is perhaps not as widespread, but it is the sort of stuff of which the wisdom of the elders is made. The confusion is so systematic that it was used quite persuasively by Adam Smith to explain why people strive so mightily for goods that will not, in fact, bring them happiness. Taking his cue from Hobbes, Smith sees us as naturally bent on what he calls "bettering our condition." We better our condition by accumulating the "goods of fortune"—external goods, as well as wealth, reputation, and power. We do so not in order to satisfy our bodily desires,

Smith argues, but in order to find ourselves the objects of approbation; for therein, we imagine, lies happiness (*Theory of Moral Sentiments* I.iii.2.1). Smith refers to this as a "prejudice" of the imagination, and as a "deception." He remarks that a man who imagines himself in the condition of the rich "thinks if he had attained all these [good things], he would sit still contentedly, and be quiet, enjoying himself in the thought of the happiness and tranquillity of his situation. He is enchanted with the distant idea of this felicity" (ibid., IV.I.7).[32] And to attain that superior station, he labors day and night, achieving moments of contentment, but always anxious to progress a bit further, to earn that much more admiration from society. At what point does he see that he has sacrificed "a real tranquillity that is at all times in his power"? It is in old age, once he has attained wealth and power, as he lies "in the last dregs of life, his body wasted with toil and diseases, his mind galled and ruffled by the memory of a thousand injuries and disappointments which he imagines he has met with from the injustice of his enemies, or from the perfidy and ingratitude of his friends, that he begins at last to find that wealth and greatness are mere trinkets of frivolous utility, no more adapted for procuring ease of body or tranquillity of mind than the tweezer-cases of the lover of toys" (ibid., IV.I.8). Then he sees the difference between contentment and real tranquillity.

When one's state of mind is at odds with the relevant facts of one's life, as in Smith's example, one is liable to regret or to be ashamed. The phenomena of regret and shame supply corroborating evidence, I think, that we naturally connect happiness with some objective state of affairs. Suppose you earned your feelings of tranquillity by means of some immoral, but secret act. Your condition of life and mind is such that you would seem to be happy; spectators think you are happy; but if the facts were known to others you would be ashamed. Even if the facts are not known, you know, somewhere in your soul, that you do not deserve to be happy, and so are not happy. You are not what you say you are. A sense of guilt, and an anxiety about being found out, bubble underneath the surface of your life. This is not an uncommon experience; it buttresses the case I am making for a distinction between happiness and contentment. In this way I grant Kant's distinction between happiness and the worthiness to be happy; except that the former I view as contentment, and the latter as happiness.[33]

Smith's compelling picture of what others would call the life of the bourgeois shows that, on an individual level, that life is vulnerable. First, misfortune or simple failure to reach the desired status puts contentment itself at risk; second, even when attained, it does not amount to true happiness; third, even when attained, it can be taken away. Consequently, this sort of "happiness" is hostage to political or social upheavals.[34] Fourth, in a sense this "happiness" is never really attained. There is never enough of the good things the possession of which allegedly constitutes happiness. The pursuit of happiness, so understood, can never rest. The notion of happiness as tranquillity, by contrast, allows for the desired stability and security.

I have argued that however much a person's subjective state of mind feels content, there must be a fact of the matter relative to which it can be evaluated if we are to baptize that person "happy." Let me offer four rather extreme examples by way of illustrating this point. The sort of contentment spoken of by Locke and Hobbes and Rousseau clearly involves an assessment of one's life and its worth. Given our tendency, however, to think of happiness in completely subjective terms, such that either no assessment of self is required or the individual's assessment is final, no matter how absurd, some attention to these more extreme examples is of use.

First, suppose that a drug were invented and were dripped into your veins, painlessly and continuously.[35] Let us pretend that the technical name of this drug is *Ataraxy*. Suppose further that Ataraxy made you unaware that you were taking it. As a result you experienced contentment over the long haul, even though your life alternated between prolonged periods as a couch potato watching soap operas, and indulgence in violent "drive-by" murders. We would want to deny that such a person is happy, however complete the feeling of tranquillity may be. For the person on Ataraxy to say of himself that he is happy (as always, in our long-range sense) is, at a minimum, to say that his tranquillity reflects his life's activities in a satisfying way. This, in turn, assumes that the person is fully aware of what those activities are (e.g., that he is aware that he does engage in violent murders and that these are *murders*). If Ataraxy prevents this awareness, then he is not happy. If Ataraxy allows it, then he might be happy, but only if he has made no mistake about his activities and their capacity to satisfy. He must believe that it is "all right" to do what he does; but if he is wrong in this belief, then he

is not happy. Happiness is linked to beliefs about the world, and these can be true or false.

Suppose, to take another example, you think yourself very happy because you think you have discovered that Elvis lives. Impartial spectators investigate, and find that a very clever impostor has tricked you. You experienced contentment, even delight, in your (false) belief. But since your belief was false, were you truly happy? I do not think so; for your life is not such as you would wish it to be on reflection, in the light of an accurate assessment of the situation. Or if you are truly happy, then why would you not be truly happy when on Ataraxy?

A third example: Say you woke up one day in your habitual spot, a heating vent on the sidewalk, fantasizing that you are rich. Suppose the fantasy takes hold; you believe yourself to be Mr. Onassis at his winter château in Gstaad. You are very happy. Or are you? You are living in a dream world and are delighted with life, but surely you are not happy. You are in fact malnourished, hungry, exposed to the elements, cold, and fighting various diseases. It is not true that ignorance is bliss; you are vulnerable in your ignorance (e.g., to hunger). This is not a formula for long-term tranquillity, for the sense of happiness under investigation here. It may be counted as a formula only for short-term contentment, at best.

Further, "happiness" achieved by fantasy seems truncated. As you lie on the heating vent, you picture the adoration bestowed on the wealthy and powerful, you imagine yourself its object; but you do not know their lives, their conversations, their failures, their triumphs. The image you conjure up in your dream life is a cartoon, and so at best a truncated partaking that does not measure up to its own object. You are not living that life, it is not yours. Even if being Onassis and eating his caviar were happiness—and I do not concede that—deluding yourself into thinking that his life is yours does not in fact provide you with the satisfactions of his life.

Consider a fourth example. Suppose you habitually drank too much and then regretted it the next morning. Suppose you went on like that for years. While drunk, you are content; in the cold light of sobriety, as you contemplate your bloodshot eyes and pudgy face in the morning's mirror, you realize that you are terribly unhappy, and that the contentment found in the bottle is a flight from the underlying deficiency of your life. It is a flight into ignorance and forgetfulness. Your contentment is a coverup of your unhappiness. It seems to me that in one form or another this sort of experience is common, and reveals several important truths, one of which is that one cannot be happy if one harbors a well-grounded, standing dissatisfaction with oneself, with how one really is.[36] This suggests that, to be happy, one must have the sort of desires a reflective person would want. In reflecting on myself, I must affirm that I am basically ordered such as I would want to be, if I am rightly to say that my life is a happy one. This helps explain why we place such a premium on long-term happiness: we see that such happiness is connected to a well-ordered life, one that is worth having.

Examples such as these suggest that while a tranquil state of mind is necessary for happiness, it is not sufficient. One's happiness is also inseparable from a reflective arrangement of one's life, which must be evaluatively linked to a notion of what sort of life is worth living. Happiness is not to be understood *simply* as a state of mind. Happiness is linked with reflectiveness, with assessment.

Purely affectual notions of happiness suffer from three defects. First, they are unstable; such happiness tends to be evanescent and destroyed by daily reality—as when after a fine day of fantasizing, your stomach is empty rather than full of caviar. Because it is unstable, it is vulnerable. What you do not know *can* hurt you. Consider an example from *Othello*. Incorrectly thinking Desdemona unfaithful, Othello cries: "I had been happy, if the general camp,/Pioneers and all, had tasted her sweet body,/So I had nothing known. O, now for ever/Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!" (3.3, l. 347–350). Othello is unhappy in a false belief; he says he would rather be ignorant and happy, but in fact the dramatic irony of the scene shows us the opposite. He would in fact be happy if he had known the truth, as the tragic ending of the play underlines. This is not simply because the truth is what he wants to hear. He would, I think, likely have been happier (once again, in my long-range sense of the term) even if Desdemona had been unfaithful.

Happiness based on self-delusion is also susceptible to the power of questioning, as when the alcoholic is made to confront head-on the question, "*Why* are you drinking?" I do not mean that this question would, itself, change the alcoholic's behavior; I mean that conceits about the "happiness" supposedly provided by alcohol are vulnerable to severe deflation. They do not stand up to (self-) questioning. I have said, however, that I am investigating "happiness" in the long-range sense, one that requires a stability of self.

Second, even if the deluded state of mind were stable, in the sense of being temporally long lasting (with the help of Ataraxy, for example), we cannot say of it that it is "happiness" without entering into an evaluative reflection about the sorts of things or activities that provide this happiness.

Third, if your experience is that of a fantasy rather than of the real thing, whatever "happiness" you derive is not a product of your being, or doing, the real thing. If, when inebriated, you imagine yourself happy because you are beloved by a family to which you are devoted, whereas in fact your family is in tatters precisely because of your drinking, is your "happiness" of the same quality or depth as that which stems from really being loved by a family to which one really is devoted? It would be impossible to produce a knock-down argument showing that the answer is negative. But consider an analogy. We frequently talk about the difference between crude and refined responses to music, and about the process of acquiring a discriminating ear such that we experience the difference between good and bad music. We know that part of this difference is that good music is not just better crafted but deeper, perhaps more original, and that listening to it with educated appreciation provides a correspondingly deeper, better aesthetic pleasure than third-rate music can provide. In music, as in other fields, much of what we call education is focused on bringing about this difference in the person's experience. Similarly, we are faithful to experience in distinguishing similarly between the "happiness" a drunkard imagines and the happiness he would possess if it were a product of reality and not fantasy.

Happiness is, then, linked to second-order desire (the desire to have the desires one has and in the way one has them). Contentment may be thought of as the satisfaction of desire(s); happiness, as the justified satisfaction that one is desiring the right things in the right way. There is therefore a connection between happiness and our conception of happiness; one needs a right understanding of it in order to have it. Since a conception of happiness must be acquired with effort, and since patterning one's life on that conception also takes effort, it follows from my account that happiness cannot simply happen to a person. It is not "found" in any normal sense. Happiness requires work. This parallels Aristotle's account of the connection between happiness and both virtues and *phronesis*.

Neither virtues nor *phronesis* come, in their full sense, automatically; they require sustained exertion and exercise.

III. PHILOSOPHY AND HAPPINESS

> They do not understand how that which differs with itself is in agreement: harmony consists of opposing tension, like that of the bow and the lyre.
>
> —Heraclitus[37]

Let us say that I am tranquil in the sense described thus far. For good reasons I am satisfied with my basic stance; I am committed to the right sorts of things, in the right way, and I act accordingly. I have no significant standing dissatisfactions with myself; I have the sorts of wants I would wish to have on reflection, I am reasonably well ordered, basically I am complete. Let us also say, so as to simplify, that I am neither in agony nor in despair in a day-to-day sense.

Tranquillity requires assessment, evaluation of my stance; otherwise it would be difficult to distinguish between contentment and tranquillity. The question "Am I happy?" develops, on my account, into the question, "Am I, on the whole, the sort of person I ought to be?" The assessment required by the latter question is a philosophical one. From Socrates on down through the tradition, the questions "Who am I?" and "What sort of person ought I be?" are simply fundamental to the philosophical enterprise.

The term "philosophical," however, is used in many ways, two of which interest me here. One sense of the term is used by the Stoics especially. There it denotes something like the dialogue that Epictetus portrays, the sort of dialogue that leads not to the investigation of epistemological or metaphysical theses, but to the clarification of principles that will permit a tranquil life. That is, "philosophy" is something like the art of living; its orientation is practical rather than theoretical. Insofar as Epictetus's *Discourses* resist a turn towards speculative theory, and are intended simply to explain and defend a few basic principles as well as what is required to live in accordance with them, these dialogues are remarkably un-Socratic, especially if Plato's portrait of Socrates is taken as the standard.[38] The interlocutor rarely responds with sustained force. There is no upward, erotic ascent in Epictetus's dialectic; nothing of the So-

cratic passion for knowledge; no termination in *aporia*, no sense of the potential irresolvability of clashing views. Contradictory wants are sorted out, made consistent with happiness understood as tranquillity, and a conception of self and of a way of life are provided—but are not themselves subject to further dialectical examination.

Correspondingly, as in so many "philosophies of life," there is a great deal that philosophy, in a more Socratic/Platonic sense, would find question-begging. "Philosophy" in this second sense—the sense I shall use for the remainder of this paper—would surely attack the connection between happiness, tranquillity, and control. But my task here is not to delve into the intricacies of Stoicism, but rather to argue that the sort of bothersome questions Plato's Socrates pursues are necessarily connected with the rational assessment of self I have made necessary to happiness.[39] I do not mean that the answers one ends up with are those of Socrates; I mean that the kind of dialogical reflection in which one engages is like that of Socrates. It is full of *aporiai*, yielding of further questions, never straightforwardly self-justifying, always lacking and incomplete.

Philosophy so understood is a passionate activity, and usually a painful dialectical labor as well. But that in itself does not establish any tension between it and happiness as I have described it, since I have argued that meta-level tranquillity and object-level perturbation are compatible. One need not agree with Aristotle that "the pleasures of gaining knowledge involve no pain" (*N.E.* X.iii.1173b16–17), or that the life of contemplation and philosophy contains pleasures of wondrous purity (*N.E.* X.vi.1177a25–27), in order to maintain the link between tranquillity and philosophy. Aristotle's picture in the *Ethics* of the theoretical life is idealized and abstracts from philosophizing as it is in actuality.

The perpetual incompleteness and self-overcoming of this particular sort of activity, however, does suggest an underlying incompatability with happiness. The philosopher will, on the one hand, naturally ascend from questions about human phenomena to second-order questions about whether this or that is the right stance to take towards the world, eventually settling on the philosophical stance, precisely as Socrates does over and over again in Plato's dialogues. When Socrates declares that the "unexamined life is not worth living for a human being" (*Apology* 38a5–6), he is declaring his allegiance to that stance. And yet, one of the consistent themes in the Platonic dialogues concerns the nature and defensibility of

the philosophical life. But this is just to say that the stability of a general stance towards the world, that framework which permitted tranquillity in the midst of turbulence, is undermined and itself thrown into motion. One becomes just as Socrates describes eros in the *Symposium*; in-between, lacking, desiring to overcome, perpetually in motion between poles of ignorance and wisdom, but also with resourcefulness. This is why, I think, Socrates never says that philosophizing is happiness or a happy activity, though Crito thinks Socrates himself always of happy temperament and remarks on his amazing calmness as he awaits execution.[40] In Plato's portrayal, only on the day of his death does Socrates smile.

Wisdom, by contrast, is portrayed by Socrates as supreme happiness (*Phaedrus* 247d; *Symposium* 212a; *Republic* 516c). For the wise, motion and rest are harmonized; this is captured rather beautifully by the image of the circular rotation of *noûs*, i.e., of the activity of mind that is contemplation by the wise (*Phaedrus* 247b6–e6). Happiness is this activity of simultaneous rest and repose. But, Socrates also tells us, wisdom is impossible in this life. Consequently, it would seem that happiness is impossible in this life. Happiness is impossible both without philosophy and with it.

Or is it? Consider the following. Both the practice of philosophizing and reflections about finitude and our desire to overcome it leave us with this picture: human beings are perpetually incomplete, and when reflective about that incompleteness, they are engaged in philosophy. As such they are dissatisfied with the answers to object-level questions, as well as with questions about the viability of the philosophical life itself. Reflecting on this life of reflection about philosophy and other topics, however, the framework of a reasonably stable stance emerges. For one sees, from this bird's-eye perspective, that the stance represented by the philosophical life is superior relative to its competitors; one sees that the philosophical life is not absolutely defensible so much as it is relatively defensible against all comers to date. One sees that by means of it, false alternatives have been isolated; that the features of the real alternatives have been discerned and brought into question; and that the process of philosophical dialogue does afford greater and greater understanding. A metaphysics takes shape correspondingly; it provides a way of contextualizing human life in an ordered cosmos. This metaphysics will itself be held open to question, as is only appropriate, given that we are not wise but are lovers of wisdom. It

will amount to what Socrates calls "human wisdom" (*Apology* 20d8). The philosopher will ask whether he has cooked up this metaphysics in a desperate attempt to make himself happy (as Socrates himself wonders at *Philebus* 28c), or whether it provides the best explanation of the phenomena. Has the philosopher shown only that any competing view that offers a *logos* can be out-argued? I would maintain that in its openness to questioning, even our most basic framework confirms the authority of the philosophical life, for that life consists precisely in posing questions and seeking answers, always with an awareness of the possibility that one's answers are open to further reasonable questions. Does this self-confirmation amounts to genuine openness, or to closure? Is it circular in a good or bad sense? The Socratic philosopher will recognize these questions as his own.

I am merely sketching the sort of answer I would give to the problem I raised about my own view of happiness.[41] I am suggesting that a third-order reflection on philosophy itself provides a sort of ledge on which one can sit, not with complete safety, but still with stability. That place is integrated with a commitment to philosophy, as well as with the day-to-day activity of philosophizing about this or that. Questioning the niche we have attained philosophically confirms it performatively, since it is an instance of the very activity we call philosophy. This metaphilosophical position may be far from the summit, but on the other hand it is far enough up so as to afford perspective and the long view. To that extent, it is the basis for whatever tranquillity nature has afforded us, and it is compatible with turbulence at both the first- and second-order levels of reflection. Differently put, that stance which is the philosophical life may be espoused in a *measured* way, in a manner that is proportionate to our self-knowledge. In its measuredness, it is tranquil.

Let me close with a reformulation of the connection between philosophy and tranquillity I have been sketching. Happiness, understood as tranquillity, might metaphorically be understood as motion in a circle that is at rest. The circle, or framework, or stance provides the stability within which activity, passion, striving, philosophizing, are oriented. Since Socratic philosophers also feel compelled to question philosophy itself, i.e., their own circle or framework or stance, they seem to undermine the basis for their own tranquillity. This process of self-undermining, however, is itself an instance of philosophizing, and therefore confirms philosophy as indispensable to reflective self-knowledge. The recognition that this is so, as well as the recognition that even this thesis cannot be held dogmatically, are themselves the circle or framework or stance that—aporetically—form the basis for tranquillity.

No tranquillity of this sort can perfectly combine rest and motion. We will never be those Platonic souls who, perfected, rest while circling and feasting on the divine. They are carried around in a comprehensive vision of truth, and need only sit still and let the mind nourish itself. So as to become *like* them, we must originate our own motion, and rest tranquil in the recognition that our circle is philosophical.

NOTES

1. For an excellent treatment of Hegel on happiness, see Wood 1991, chapter 3.
2. I refer to Sidgwick 1981, bk. II, chs. 5, 6, *et passim*.
3. It bears the amazing title *The Conquest of Happiness*.
4. See Annas 1993, Telfer 1980, and Strasser 1967, 286–302. For a review and bibliography of other literature see Den Uyl and Machan 1983.
5. Kant (1949, 35–36) provides one explanation: "But, unfortunately, the notion of happiness is so indefinite that although every man wishes to attain it, yet he never can say definitely and consistently what it is that he really wishes and wills. The reason of this is that all the elements which belong to the notion of happiness are altogether empirical, that is, they must be borrowed from experience, and nevertheless the idea of happiness requires an absolute whole, a maximum of welfare in my present and all future circumstances. . . . [But] he is unable, on any principle, to determine with certainty what would make him truly happy; because to do so he would need to be omniscient. . . . The problem to determine certainly and universally what action would promote the happiness of a rational being is completely insoluble . . . because happiness is not an ideal of reason but of imagination, resting solely on empirical grounds." See also Kant 1993, 20 and also 25: happiness varies from person to person, and in that sense is subjective because "where one places one's happiness is a question of the particular feeling of pleasure or displeasure in each person, and even of the differences in needs occasioned by changes of feeling in one and the same person." From Kant's standpoint, then, Aristotle's discussion of "happiness"—indeed, his whole discussion of ethics—amounts to a badly executed anthropology. In this paper my position on happiness is incompatible with that of Kant.
6. On the short-term sense, see for example Nietzsche's comment (*Beyond Good and Evil*, sec. 279): "Men of profound sadness betray themselves

when they are happy: they have a way of embracing happiness as if they wanted to crush and suffocate it, from jealousy: alas, they know only too well that it will flee." Cf. Solon's remark to Croesus: "Until he is dead, hold off, and not yet call him happy, but fortunate." Herodotus I.32.

7. This "empirical question" is, I admit, notoriously difficult to substantiate. For an attempt at an empirical determination of what people say about their own happiness, see Scitovsky 1992, esp. ch. 7. Perhaps it is instructive to listen to the testimony of those have succeeded in accumulating wealth: Ross Perot declared in his Commencement address at Boston University on May 22, 1994 that he knows personally almost all of the very rich people in the world and that virtually none of them is happy.
8. Annas remarks that "the development of the debate about virtue and happiness from Aristotle through the Stoics to Antiochus rests on this point of method: how much of the content of our initial intuitions about happiness is it important to retain?" The debate concerned in part the "choice of candidate for giving us the content of happiness—pleasure, tranquillity, virtue and so on" (Annas 1993, 233).
9. For example, Leibniz remarks (through Theophilius) that "happiness is nothing but lasting joy"; and "joy appears to me to signify a state in which pleasure predominates in us" (Leibniz 1981, 90, 166).
10. See the quotation from the *Fundamental Principles* in n5 above.
11. Cf. Epictetus's remark: "What, then, is the fruit of these doctrines? Precisely that which must needs be both the fairest and the most becoming for those who are being truly educated—tranquillity (*ataraxia*), fearlessness, freedom." *Discourses* II.i.21–22.
12. Cf. Rousseau's remarks about happiness in the fifth *Promenade* (1979, 68–9).
13. In this paragraph I draw upon Edmunds 1987, ch. 2.
14. See Epictetus, *Discourses* IV.iv.34–38, vi.34, IV.viii.27–33, and *Enchiridion* 29.7.
15. For a similar contrast between "uneasiness" and "happiness" see Locke 1990 II.xxi.42–46.
16. My distinction between the two kinds of anxiety parallels (though it may not be the same as) Heidegger's distinction between fear and *Angst* in *Being and Time* I.6 section 40. Heidegger there says that in the latter one feels "uncanny" (or "unfamiliar," "not at home"; *unheimlich*), which would naturally seem to be an anxious feeling. By II.3, however, Heidegger speaks briefly of this *Angst* as bringing "joy" along with it.
17. Many passages, especially among the moderns, will be found to articulate the sense that, in short, "God is dead." Cf. Smith's musing: "To this universal benevolence, on the contrary, the very suspicion of a fatherless world, must be the most melancholy of all reflections; from the thought that all the unknown regions of infinite and incomprehensible space may be filled with nothing but endless misery and wretchedness. All the splendour of the highest prosperity can never enlighten the gloom with which so dreadful an idea must necessarily over-shadow the imagination" (Smith 1982, VI.ii.3.2).
18. This point is also made in Brague 1988, 477: "Il [Aristotle] vise avant tout à établir la supériorité de la vie contemplative. Ce faisant, il ne thématise que le *contenu* du bonheur. L'acte d'être heureux en tant qu'acte, dans son accomplissement, reste implicite. Aristote n'a pas décrit le bonheur comme expérience. It sait pourtant parfaitement que l'acte contient une actuosité interne, ou comme on voudra dire."
19. He also notes at *N.E.* II.iii.1104b24–25 that some thinkers say that the virtues are states of "*apatheias*" and "*ēremias*" i.e., of lack of passion and rest or quietness. He rejects that view on the grounds that it omits to add "in the right manner" and "at the right time"; but he does not reject the notion completely.
20. Aristotle asks, "Why should we not call happy the man who exercises his abilities according to the highest standards of virtue and excellence in a context which affords him sufficient resources and not merely for a brief moment but throughout his life?" *N.E.* I.10.1101a14–16, trans. Lear 1988, 155. A person objecting along the lines I have indicated might respond: "Why should we?"
21. See *N.E.* X.iv.1175a13–15: "Life is an activity (*energeia*), and each man actively exercises (*energei*) his favorite faculties upon the objects he loves most. A man who is musical, for example, exercises his hearing upon tunes, an intellectual (*philomathēs*) his thinking upon the subjects of his study (*ta theōrēmata*), and so forth."
22. I am not here offering interpretations of Aristotle or Stoicism; I am reflecting on and appropriating elements of outlooks that, broadly speaking, fall within Aristotelian and Stoic traditions.
23. I have slightly emended the translation.
24. See for example Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* I.9.
25. For some helpful reflections on the temporal dimension of this integration, see Brague 1988, 479–81.
26. For a moving testimony to the power of Epictetus's philosophy to save one's integrity and happiness in a situation that is close to that of a concentration camp, see Stockdale 1993. The "laboratory" is a North Vietnamese prison camp, in which Admiral Stockdale spent eight years, and in which he was repeatedly tortured.
27. See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* X.118.
28. Here I am in agreement with Barrow 1980, 66–67.
29. For a useful description of "contentment," see Strasser 1967, 286–88. On page 287 he remarks: "The contented person has all that he wants, because he wants nothing that he cannot have; and thus he succeeds also in being happy."
30. One could adduce the example of the happy tyrant (if there is such a thing) to the same effect. This is a notion discussed by Socrates and Polus in the *Gorgias* 469a ff., and in Xenophon's *Hiero*.

31. I have in mind Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Part III, "On Virtue that Makes Small"; Heidegger's *Being and Time* I.4–5 *et passim*. By contrast, consider the distinction between happiness and contentment in Rousseau's ninth *Promenade*: "Happiness is a permanent condition which does not seem to be made for man here-below. Everything on earth is in constant flux, which permits nothing to take on a constant form. Everything around us changes. . . . Let us take advantage of mental contentment when it comes . . . . I have seldom seen happy men, perhaps not at all. But I have often seen contented hearts; and of all the objects which have struck me, that is the one which has made me most content" (Rousseau 1979, 122).
32. Thanks to these "prejudices of the imagination," we subject ourselves to the most extraordinary labor: "When we consider the condition of the great, in those delusive colours in which the imagination is apt to paint it, it seems to be almost the abstract idea of a perfect and happy state. It is the very state which, in all our waking dreams and idle reveries, we had sketched out to ourselves as the final object of all our desires" (Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* I.iii.2.2). This is the "deception which rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind" (ibid., IV.I.10), and to that extent is a beneficial deception.
33. For Kant's distinction see Kant 1993, 136: "Morals is not really the doctrine of how to make ourselves happy but of how we are to be *worthy* of happiness."
34. As Strasser nicely puts it, the contented person "can feel at peace only so long as he knows his position is secure. This characteristic also points to the fragility of the happiness of contentment. It is not able to flourish on volcanic soil, in epochs which are shaken by spiritual fever and crises" (Strasser 1967, 288). The person who seeks "happiness" qua contentment is naturally and literally "conservative," precisely as Smith indicates in the *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.
35. A thought experiment of this sort is elaborated by Robert Nozick in the chapter on happiness in Nozick 1989, 104–105. Recent discussion about Prozac touches on the issues I am about to raise by means of the fictitious drug "Ataraxy."
36. My formulation is close to but less subjective than that of Montague 1967, 87: "One logically necessary condition of happiness seems then to be that the happy person should have no standing dissatisfactions which are serious from his point of view."
37. Diels B.51, in Freeman 1983, 28.
38. For example, see the discussion in the *Discourses* IV.iv.14–18 on reading philosophy books, and on what philosophy has to teach us. See also II.xii. on "the art of argumentation [dialectic]." The dialogue at I.xxix.22–29 is worth summarizing here: someone grabs me by the cloak and drags me into the market place and shouts, "Philosopher, what good have your judgments done you? See, you are being dragged off to prison; see, you are going to have your head cut off." Epicetus answers this imaginary interlocutor: "And what kind of Introduction to Philosophy could I have studied, which would prevent me from being dragged off, if a man who is stronger than I am should take hold of my cloak? Or would prevent me from being thrown into the prison, if ten men should hustle me and throw me into it? Have I, then, learned nothing else? I have learned to see that everything which happens, if it be outside the realm of my moral purpose, is nothing to me." One must learn philosophical things "so as to be able to manifest them in action" (I.xxix.35).
39. There is an alternative way of understanding the sought-for assessment, however, viz., one that unfolds within the context of religious faith. Given the complexities involved in meeting the counter-example provided by revealed religion especially, I must postpone the response for another occasion. The (Socratic) approach I take would, of course, include questioning the basic principles held in faith by the reflective religious person.
40. *Phaedrus* 256a7–b3 might seem a counterexample; but the issue is complicated by the fact that the topic is the love or friendship of lover and beloved. The Eleatic Stranger does suggest that philosophy is happiness (*Statesman* 272c and context); but this is because his conceptions of philosophy and dialectic differ markedly from those of Socrates.
41. For a full discussion of philosophy so understood I refer the reader to Griswold 1988, 143–67.

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